

May 4, 2018

FLORIDA HEALTH IN PINELLAS THANKS FLORIDA'S NURSES DURING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK



Contact:

Audrey Stasko, Public Information Specialist
Audrey.Stasko@FLHealth.gov
727-824-6900, ext. 4575

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) recognizes May 6-12 as National Nurses Week, a time to honor the crucial role nurses play in keeping Florida's residents and visitors healthy and safe. The department commends the many nurses who volunteered to provide care in special needs shelters during Hurricane Irma for their hard work and sacrifice.

Last year, during Hurricane Irma, more than 2,000 Pinellas county residents and visitors in need of special care evacuated to one of three special needs shelters staffed by DOH-Pinellas and Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) personnel. Together, DOH-Pinellas and PCSB staff safely sheltered more evacuees during this activation than in history of special needs sheltering for the county. 390 DOH-Pinellas staff, including nurses, provided care for very ill and vulnerable people who had nowhere else to turn for shelter.



DOH-Pinellas recognizes all nurses, especially those in public health, who influence others to improve their health through innovative methods and caring service.

"So many of the DOH-Pinellas staff, especially nurses, did heroic, superhuman work during Hurricane Irma and I was left in awe of the kindness, compassion and dedication they all showed," said Dr. Ulyee Choe, director of DOH-Pinellas. "Our nurses continue to inspire us each day and DOH-Pinellas couldn't do what it does without them. For that, we thank them."

Nursing is a diverse field, and public health nurses can work in many different settings. They work in clinics to provide immunizations, conduct testing for diseases and infections, help people manage chronic conditions like diabetes and asthma and inspire people achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Public health nurses also help communities prepare for natural disasters and assist in disaster relief efforts. During Hurricane Irma, Florida's dedicated nurses and nurses from other states volunteered to staff more than 90 special needs shelters in 53 counties, providing mass care for people who could not safely remain in their home.

Nurses continue to be high-demand in Florida. The Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) estimates that by 2025 Florida will have a shortage of at least 50,300 registered nurses, or 56,000 registered nurses and 12,500 licensed practical nurses.

To respond to the growing nursing shortage, the department joined the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact in January 2018, allowing registered nurses and licensed practical nurses who hold licensure in one Compact state to practice in any of the 27 Compact states without having to obtain additional licenses. Florida now issues a multi-state license to new applicants who meet the Compact licensure requirements; nurses who reside in Florida and hold an active, unrestricted license will also have the option to convert from a standard Florida license to a multi-state license.

For more information regarding the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact please visit the Florida Board of Nursing web page at <http://floridanursing.gov/>.

To learn more about obtaining a license as a nurse, visit www.flhealthsource.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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